



5 STEP RISK ASSESSMENT QUICK GUIDE



**WORKERS' COMPENSATION
MANAGEMENT BUREAU**
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION

5 STEP RISK ASSESSMENT QUICK GUIDE

GUIDANCE

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INTRODUCTION

The Workers Compensation Management Bureau, within the Department of Administration, developed this guidance to assist State of Montana agencies in assessing the risks to employees from hazards in the workplace. It explains who should be involved, why and how to involve employees on the assessment of risk and the risk assessment process. Other Montana governmental employers or private sector employers should consult with their own safety consultants prior to applying this guidance to their worksite locations to ensure conformity with applicable laws and standards.

For guidance on implementing an occupational risk management program in your organization please see the Workers Compensation Management Bureau safety page.

WHAT IS AN OCCUPATIONAL RISK ASSESSMENT?

A risk assessment has 3 purposes:

- identifying what could cause injury or illness in your organization (hazards).
- decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk).
- take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this is not possible, control the risk.

Key points of an assessment

- Assessments must be adequate. They must be sufficient to guide employers' judgements about the measures they should take to fulfil their legal obligations.
- Assessments must cover all the risks to the safety and health of employees to which they are exposed at work.
- Assessments should cover risks to non-employees who may be foreseeably affected by what the employer does (e.g. contractors, visitors).
- A review is advised when there are changes to a workplace, new equipment, or an accident. Regular reviews are part of good management practice.
- Where groups of employees are especially at risk, the groups must be identified as part of the assessment (e.g. new employees, disabled employees).
- How far an assessment proceeds beyond a commonsense estimate of hazards and situations will depend on the complexity of the work and the degree of risks present. (e.g. a nuclear facility versus a warehouse)

5 STEP RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment process for most organizations should be a simple straightforward process. The 5-step risk assessment is a step by step process that simplifies an occupational risk assessment. High risk industries or tasks may require a more in-depth specialized risk assessment. For example, when working with explosives.

The steps are as follows.

1. Identify the hazards
2. Assess the risks
3. Control the risks
4. Record the findings
5. Review the controls

1. Identify the Hazards

Look around your workplace and think about what may cause harm. Think about:

- how people work and how plant and equipment are used.
- what chemicals and substances are used?
- what safe or unsafe work practices exist.
- the general state of your premises.

Look back at your accident and ill health records as these can help you identify less obvious hazards. Take account of non-routine operations, such as maintenance, cleaning, or changes in production cycles.

Think about hazards to health, such as manual material handling (lifting and moving items), use of chemicals.

For each hazard, think about how employees, contractors, visitors, or members of the public might be harmed. Employees rushing at the end of the day, distracted by other employees, tiredness, redundancy of work performed, cutting corners to finish the job on time, incorrectly storing equipment.

Some employees are more vulnerable than others, for example:

- New employees.
- Young employees.
- New or expectant mothers.
- Employees with disabilities.

Involve your employees in the assessment, they are doing the job, they know where the issues are and will have good ideas on action to mitigate the risks to them.

2. Assess the Risks.

Once you have identified the hazards, decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how serious it could be. This is assessing the level of risk.

Decide:

- Who might be harmed and how?
- What you are already doing to control the risks.
- What further action you need to take to control the risks.
- Who needs to carry out the action?
- When the action is needed by (deadlines that cause hurried work).

3. Control the Risks

Look at what you are already doing, and the controls you already have in place. Ask yourself:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

If you need further controls, consider:

- redesigning the job or changing the process.

- replacing the materials, machinery, or process
- organizing your work to reduce exposure to the materials, machinery, or process.
- identifying and implementing practical measures needed to work safely.
- providing personal protective equipment and making sure employees wear it.

Put the controls you have identified in place. You are not expected to eliminate all risks, but you need to do everything 'reasonably practicable' to protect people from harm. This means balancing the level of risk against the measures needed to control the real risk in terms of money, time, or trouble.

4. Record your Findings.

Record your significant findings, including.

- the hazards (things that may cause harm)
- who might be harmed and how?
- What is in place control the risks?
- What is require to control the risks further?

To help you, we have a [risk assessment template and examples](#).

5. Review the Controls.

You must review the controls you have put in place to make sure they are working. You should also review them if:

- An injury has happened.
- they may no longer be effective.
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There are changes in the workplace that could lead to new risks such as changes to:

- staff
- a process
- Changes to work process or Substances added to the work practice
- New equipment

Also consider a review if your employees have spotted any problems or there have been any accidents or near misses.

Update your risk assessment record with any changes you make.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

[OSHA Recommended Practices for Safety & Health Programs](#)

[Montana Department of Labor & Industry](#)

[Montana Safety Culture Act](#)

[Montana Workers Compensation Bureau - for state agencies](#)

REVIEW & AMENDMENT HISTORY

REVIEW NUMBER	BY WHOM	DATE	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES IF ANY	<u>Has the latest version been uploaded to the site in PDF FORMAT</u>
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				